



HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND

Office of the County Auditor

FISCAL IMPACT NOTE

Bill Number 12-18, As Amended

Fire & Emergency Services Commission

Sponsor: Council President Boniface at the request of the County Executive

Summary of Legislation

AN ACT to add new Article XXXVIII, Fire and Emergency Services Commission, to Part 5, Quasi-Governmental Agencies, of Chapter 9, Boards, Commissions, Councils and Agencies, of the Harford County Code, as amended; to establish a Fire and Emergency Services Commission and set forth the membership, powers and duties of the Commission; and generally relating to fire and emergency services.

The bill will take effect 60 days after it becomes law.

Fiscal Impact Summary

The ratification of this bill will likely require \$5,070 in training support each year. The overall cost reductions from the Commission cannot be determined at this time.

All county citizens are benefitted by having a well-trained and well equipped Fire and Emergency Services personnel. Citizens receiving emergency services will be directly impacted by any service fees the Commission recommends that are subsequently implemented.

Fiscal Analysis

Currently, Chapter 9 of the Harford County code provides guidance for Boards, Commissions, Councils and Agencies. There is not currently a commission in place to address fire and emergency services. This bill, if ratified would create the Fire and Emergency Services Commission, under Chapter 9, Part 5, Quasi-Governmental Agencies. Part 5 currently includes only one agency – Revenue Authority.

The Commission's purpose would be to provide guidance to County officials on matters concerning technical standards and best practices for providing fire and emergency services. The Commission's duties extend to provide guidance on administrative matters related to emergency service fees, length of service award pension program and recommendations for budget allocations. The intent of the bill appears to be to create an advisory body that will add quality assurance, technical expertise and efficiencies to the County's management of Emergency Services. Per the County Code, Chapter 9, Part 4,

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Administrative Offices and Agencies, such as the Division of Emergency Operations, are part of the Executive Branch. They are linked with an advisory commission. In the absence of a related department, the Fire and Emergency Services Commission's administrative costs will be absorbed by the Division of Emergency Operations.

The bill does not address compensation for commission members; however, it does provide that the commission shall "receive appropriate administrative assistance, training support and reasonable reimbursement of expenses." Other Harford County Boards and Commissions' administrative costs were absorbed by the related departments. These costs are not separately tracked. The Director of Administration has advised that training support would be used to ensure that commission members are involved in conferences and other events to increase their knowledge. We estimate training support can be funded with \$5,070 per year, as follows:

	Per Person	Total
National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Membership	\$30	\$ 120*
NVFC Annual Spring Meeting	\$550**	\$4,950
Annual Total for Training Support		\$5,070

*Assumes the 6 service provider members are already NFVC members.

**Assumes conference registration fee and 2 hotel nights in Alexandria, VA.

The Division of Emergency Services receives approximately \$9.1 million in grant funding and had a total appropriation of \$19 million dollars for FY2012. The Division of Emergency Services provides approximately \$2.25 million to the Fire and EMS Foundation and \$6.11 million in total to the 12 Volunteer Fire and Ambulance Companies.

The Commission would need to save at least 0.06% of the Emergency Services budget to provide a positive fiscal impact to the County.

If not ratified, this bill would have a neutral fiscal impact.

To determine the impact of this bill, we assumed that this commission would require a level of financial support similar to the other boards, commissions and agencies in Parts 2, 3 and 5 of Code Chapter 9.

Amendments 1 through 7 to the bill reduce the fiscal impact by an estimated \$1,130. This change is because the amendments change the number of commission members (from 11 to 9) and to change the composition of the representatives, accordingly. The amendments also serve to clarify that the commission will be advisory in nature, not regulatory.

Additional Information

Data Sources: Division of Emergency Operations, Fiscal Year 2012 Budget

Previous Introductions: None.

Fiscal Note History: Version 02 (April 10, 2012) based on bill as of April 10, 2012.

Fiscal Analysis was prepared by Chrystal Moore, County Auditor. Inquiries may be directed to (410)638-3161.